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Convocation Address

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THE WORK, WEALTH, AND

HAPPINESS OF MEN

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You have heard so much about the war, peace proposals, the new freedoms, post-war planning, the coming age of plastics and electronics, that I have thought it might be a relief, if in this commencement address, I discussed some of the common-place values of life.

Some years ago I read a book written by H. G. Wells entitled, The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind. I do not remember much about the content of this book for I was not impressed with it at the time, but the title has always intrigued me. Today, I want to talk to

you for a little while on the subject,
The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Men.
Please do not regard this as a sermon
but just a bit of the homely philosophy
of life of a pilgrim.

We are told in the Bible that when
Jesus was twelve years old he went with
Mary and Joseph and many others down to
Jerusalem to observe the Feast of the
Passover. Just how long the party was
in Jerusalem the Scriptures do not tell
us. When the Feast was over they started
back to their home in Nazareth. When
they had gone a day's journey suddenly
they discovered that Jesus was not in
their company. You can well imagine the
anxiety of these parents as they returned
to Jerusalem in search of this lad. It
is no wonder that they had to search for
him for three days because they found

him where you would never expect to find a twelve year old boy, in the Temple discussing the fundamental issues of life with the learned men of that day. And when they discovered him his mother, with some show of impatience, said unto him: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing". And Jesus said unto them: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

And thus at the tender age of twelve Jesus recognized that he had a work to do in the world and that he was preparing himself for that work. I have observed thru many years of close contact with young people, that the youth who early recognizes that he has a mission - a work to do in the world - succeeds far

better than he who dilly-dallies, procrastinates and cannot decide what he wants to do. Knowing what one wants to do motivates a life, gives it direction.

I think the Biblical story of Adam and Eve being driven from the Garden of Eden and compelled to earn their bread by the "sweat of the brow" has given people the wrong philosophy about work. Too many people look upon work as a form of punishment when as a matter of fact it is the greatest blessing ever vouchsafed unto men. There is never a year but that this scene occurs in my office: Enter a father and mother accompanied by an over_grown boy of 17 or 18 years of age. The parents usually bear the marks of hard manual labor. They proceed to tell me they have brought the boy to

the university to get an education because they do not want him to have to work as hard as they have had to work. After placing the parents at ease, I usually proceed to disillusion them regarding the question of work. I show them that there is no royal road to an education, that it means work, hard work, and that when a man becomes educated he

is under obligation to society to use his ability in the service of mankind, that educated people ought to work harder and many of them do, than those who have not had the opportunity to get an education. I tell them if they want to leave the boy under these circumstances, we shall be glad to give him a chance at an education. Thus far the boy has always been left.

I agree with President Spreul of the University of California when he says: "A little hard work for the purpose of self support is just as important in the life of a young person as a reasonable amount of vitamins in the diet. Too much of either is bad; too little may be worse".

At this point, pardon me for being personal. But I want to pay a tribute to my father who was one of my best teachers. He had three sons and he taught us how to work. He was prompted by the same philosophy that caused him to break his fine saddle horses when they were two years old to work under harness and saddle. He believed in the discipline of work. Many is the day I have followed a mule up and down a corn row from sun-rise to sun-set. I did not like it

then any more than the young colts liked being hitched to a bike. But I finally got used to it, and it was not all bad. Today, I thank God for the discipline of work taught me long years ago. Work has never seemed hard, humdrum, onerous, or something to escape since those far off days of my boyhood. My work has been the pleasure of my life. In every position I have ever held I have enjoyed my work. It never gets monotonous. With the dawn of each new day I find something thrilling to do. I can understand what George Herbert Palmer meant in his great essay on The Ideal Teacher when he said: "Harvard College pays me for doing what I would gladly pay it for allowing me to do".

Unfortunately, not all people like to work. There are people who are very ingenious in discovering ways and means to keep out of productive labor. Many years ago I saw a man sit on top of the flag pole on the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville for ten days. He was establishing some sort of a record. But I can top that one. Some years later I lived in a community where we had "court-house sitters". Did you ever meet a court-house sitter? Some of them had records of ten, fifteen, twenty, and occasionally twenty-five years. When one of them died usually his seat was thereafter occupied by his eldest son. How they lived I was never able to fathom for they were never absent from their accustomed places. About a year ago the manager of my farm was desperately in need

of labor to help him house our tobacco crop. Thinking he might persuade one of these "court-house sitters" to help, he approached him and asked him if he would like a job. The man was very positive he would like a job. Then the farmer asked him if he could cut tobacco. The "sitter" assured him he could and asked the farmer what he would pay him. Whereupon the farmer said: "I'll pay you what you are worth". The loafer scratched his head a minute, then replied: "I'll be darned if I will work for that little".

During the depression years a young man came to my office after college had opened in the fall. He begged for a job that would pay his expenses while attending college. There were no jobs available at that time. Every job had been assigned. This young man was so eloquent in his

plea that I finally gave him a room in my home with the understanding that he would help with the lawn and garden. I was soon to discover that this boy did not want a job but a pension. When talking to him about his work on one occasion, he said to me: "I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours". There is something paradoxical about work. When we have it, too often we attempt to avoid it, and when we are out of it, we look and pray for it.

There are a great many people in the world like the goldfish.

"Smugly, serene they lie content
Or softly circle to and fro
But never a whit the wiser grow."

"Life is to some a crystal bowl
Where they aimlessly circle to and
fro,
But to others it is a bowl of
Bohemian ware
With the red of passion
And the gray of care."

Have you ever thought of the difference between work and play? Some years ago Earl Combs, one of the great ball players of the New York Yankees, was a student in one of my classes in psychology. I met him on the street one day when he was at the pinnacle of his career as a ball-player. At that time, I knew that he was being paid about \$15,000 per year. I stopped him and inquired: "Earl, do you play base-ball or do you work at base-ball?" Quick as a flash he replied: "Professor, I play base-ball but many of the fellows work at it."

About fifteen years ago I went to a clinic for a physical check-up. The physician pronounced me to be in excellent physical condition but strongly recommended that I take more exercise. "Golf", he said, "was what I needed". My wife made me a gift of the clubs, I joined the golf club and for five years I worked at golf as faithfully as a man could. Ten years ago I bought a farm and started breeding registered hereford cattle. I became a Saturday-afternoon farmer. Now I work at golf and play at farming.

After all whether an activity is work or play depends largely on one's attitude toward it. I believe most successful men enter into their work in the same spirit that a boy rushes off to play a game of ball with the gang.

I am in agreement with Channing Pollock who says: "There are dirty jobs, of course; dull jobs, devastating jobs. Even in these, it may be possible to find something. I am sure that ninety per cent of all work is loaded with happiness, if you look for it."

Some months ago I went with Major General Dalton to inspect Darnall Hospital where many of the shell shocked patients of this war have been sent. We found there a number of marines and soldiers who had gone thru the Guadalcanal Campaign. We observed the different treatments that were administered to these disordered minds as a result of the hell thru which they had passed. For its therapeutic value, the doctors told us, nothing was superior to light work.

I never feel sorry for the boy or girl who has to work. I am sorry for the youth whose parents shield him from work. There are always jobs a plenty to challenge you. Not all pioneering has been done.

THE STRUGGLE
Edgar A. Guest

He is dead who sees nothing to change
No wrong to make right;
Who travels no new way or strange
In search of the light.

Who never sets out for a goal
That he sees from afar,
But contents his indifferent soul
With things as they are.

During the last half century my generation has done some things very well. By the application of the scientific method to our physical and material problems, we have transformed our environment into a veritable fairy

land. We invented the automobile and farm tractor, and then transformed them into the armored car and tank. We perfected the aeroplane and out of it built a bomber. Ten thousand other gadgets came from the laboratories of our researchers. They have changed the character of our lives but we have not learned how to use them for the blessing of ourselves and of mankind. The challenge to your generation is to make these gadgets servants of the people. ~~It remains for your generation to conquer the robot.~~ My generation has solved many of the problems in the realm of the physical sciences. It is left to your generation to exploit the social sciences. Your problems are essentially^{ly} spiritual, economical, political, and educational.

I have faith that you will solve them.

Men work to accumulate wealth. Let us now examine briefly this phase of the subject.

What is wealth? Is it stocks and bonds, land and buildings, cattle on a thousand hills? These represent a certain form of wealth. This kind of wealth is essential to society but it is far from being the only kind of wealth a people must accumulate. This is the type of wealth that vanishes in a depression or revolution. It is the most ephemeral kind of wealth.

A few years ago I stood in front of a beautiful Russian mansion. I asked my guide about it. He told me it had been built by a very rich man. I inquired if he still lived there. "No", said the guide, "it is now a rest home."

"What happened to the man who owned it?" I asked. "He was liquidated," replied my guide. "Why," I asked, "was he liquidated?" "Because he was a very rich man," responded the guide, who apparently felt that was sufficient reason for his liquidation.

"Then a boy I played with Stanley Reed. His father was our family physician. Stanley was an only child, and he inherited from his parents much rich farm land and other material possessions. He still owns all the property that was left to him. But this does not constitute his real wealth. Stanley Reed was a studious boy. He graduated from Kentucky Wesleyan College, then from Yale; he studied law at the University of Virginia and at Columbia University. Still anxious for further

preparation, he journeyed to France and studied at the Sorbonne. He gave himself the best preparation for law that it was possible to secure. He became a scholar in his field, a man with a disciplined mind. President Roosevelt probably never made a better appointment than when he named Stanley Reed, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. Justice Stanley Reed's fortune is not the farn land inherited from his father, but his keen, analytical mind and sterling character. If all his material possessions should be swept away, he would still be a wealthy man.

Again I quote from Channing Pollock:

"Enough, we must have, of course.

But when we are adequately fed, and clothed, and housed, the more

abundant life begins having to do with what is in mind and heart rather than with what is in closet or bank. What I don't understand is why, when we speak of 'high standards of living' we always mean sink coats and motor cars. Aren't the standards by which we are ultimately known, and those that bring happiness, born of culture, courtesy, understanding, appreciation, and love? Isn't it true that a man is rich less in proportion to what he has than in his contentment with what he has?"

* * * * *

"Happiness isn't locked up in vaults it is locked up in you. Take the advice of one happy man; When your

Good fairy comes along with her
three wishes, let the first be,

"Don't give me less than I can use
well"; and the second, "Don't give

me more"; and let your third, and
most important, wish be, "With

whatever you give, give me pleasure
in what I have."

Which brings me to a consideration
of happiness. The constitution of the

United States guarantees us, life,
liberty, and pursuit of happiness. You

will note that life and liberty are
guaranteed but the constitution can

guarantee you only the pursuit of
happiness. Whether we overtake

happiness or not depends on each
individual.

In 1936, I went to Europe on the second trip of the Queen Mary. Seated at my table in the dining room was a young woman whose parents died when she was a child leaving her a great fortune. Her guardian had sent her to a girl's school in the East but she did not like it. She was in pursuit of happiness so she went to Hollywood and lived for a time only to be disillusioned. Someone told her she would probably find happiness in Paris and thence she journeyed only to be disappointed again. Then she went to Vienna, Florence and other places always expecting to overtake happiness but it always eluded her. This young woman told me ^{on} ~~of~~ her return to this country ~~that~~ that she was still unhappy. Now, she said she was going back to Paris and she was certain she was

going to find happiness this time. I saw her get off the ship at Cherbourg and I have never seen or heard of her since. But of one thing I am certain - that she never overtook happiness in her pursuit unless perchance she returned to the home town of her parents in the Middle West and got interested in the local hospital, church, library, school, or community chest. Identified herself with the community's constructive problems and spent some of her wealth making other people's lives richer.

Then there is another type of pursuer of happiness who is doomed to disappointment. It is the man or woman who is going to live after while. We had a neighbor, when I was a boy, who was always going to send his daughters to college as soon as he lifted the

mortgage on the farm. But the girls married before the debt was paid. As soon as he redeemed the mortgage, he bought another farm joining his property and went deeper in debt than ever. He was always saying to my father: "After I get out of debt I am going to live." But he kept buying more and more land always going in debt for the new tract. You see what he wanted was only all the land that touched his land. "After while I am going to take things easier", he said to me the last time I ever saw him. He was then past seventy.

Everyone in this audience has read Gone With the Wind. You will recall how Scarlett O'Hara admired and loved her mother for the fine virtues her mother possessed. Scarlett really wanted to be like her mother and when she did mean,

hateful, cheap, dishonest and unethical
 note she would say: "I am not going to
 think about this now, but after while I
 am going to be like mother - I am going
 to be a lady". But Gertrude never

quite became a lady. She postponed
 achieving that ideal too long.

There are people who are always going
 to be happy after while; when they pay
 off the debt, complete their education,
 get married, build the new home, secure
 a better job, get the children well

launched on their careers. These
 procrastinators of happiness all too

frequently let life slip by without

achieving this coveted prize. Now is

the time to be happy. You have no

guarantee on the future.

Who is the happy man? President

Timothy Dwight answered this query:

"The happiest person", he said, "is the person who thinks the most interesting thoughts".

Emerson said it in another way. "Life", said he, "consists in what a man is thinking of all day long".

Robert Louis Stevenson, in Treasure Island, says: "Make us happy and you make us good". Also, "I know what happiness is, for I have done good work".

Kipling tells us in L'envoi:

"And those that were good/ shall be happy:

They shall sit in a golden chair,

They shall splash at a ten-league canvas

With brushes of comet's hair;

They shall find real saints to draw from,

Magdalene, Peter and Paul;

They shall work for an age at a sitting

And never be tired^t all!"

Louis L. Mann, in his delightful little book, In Quest of the Bluebird, says: "Happiness is a perfume which you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself. When you are good to others, you are best to yourself."

Permit me to close this address by quoting Henry Van Dyke's Work:

"Let me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
'This is my work; my blessing, not my doom
Of all who live, I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right
way'".

"Then shall I see it not too great, nor
small,
To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;
Then shall I cheerful greet the laboring
hours,
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows
fall
At eventide, to play and love and rest,
Because I know for me my work is best".

May I wish for you who are graduating
today, work that will be pleasant,
wealth that will suffice, and happiness
unlimited.

Wist ye not that I must be about
my Father's business?